

PART ONE.

Art Work

- OF -

CITY OF KALAMAZOO.



Published in Twelve Parts.



THE W. H. PARISH PUBLISHING CO.

1894.



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CHICAGO

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ON THE KALAMAZOO RIVER.

THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO.

A GREAT CITY like London or Paris, or New York or Chicago, strikes the imagination by its vastness and is counted one of the wonders of the world. But if we reflect a moment we shall see that such a city with its millions of population, is no more perfect in its organism and autonomy, physical, political, social and industrial, than a city of 25,000 inhabitants. Nay, sometimes hardly so much so, for the great city not unfrequently has grown out of due proportion and become unshapely and unwieldy.

Tested as a place of residence for civilized human beings the small city is more perfect and convenient than the great one. It may seem paradoxical, for men do not stop to think, but what modern convenience or improvement, what luxury or embellishment pertaining to human life in this wonderful age and country has Chicago, for instance, which Kalamazoo does



GOVERNMENT BUILDING.



ON THE KALAMAZOO RIVER.



RESIDENCE OF EDWARD WOODBURY.



RESIDENCE OF M. H. LANE.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



SCENE ON THE RIVER.

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not possess? Paved streets lighted by electricity, with the best system of sewage coursing underneath, while the coolest and clearest of spring water pours from a thousand hydrants and breaks into the spray of fountains; electric cars and telephones; stores and markets, shops and bazaars; churches, schools and colleges; libraries, theatres and hospitals; all these, and everything else that may go to make up the complement of modern city life, can be found in Kalamazoo.

And what is better, they can be found close at hand, convenient for approach and use. No long journey to parks, or churches or theatres, as in the great cities—you can find these close by—perhaps only a block or two away. And all the great shows, all the great lecture or theatrical attractions that visit the large cities come here, to your own doors. All natural interest or curiosity, or desire for improvement can be gratified right here at home.

So the proposition is seen to be true that the small city is not necessarily, or ordinarily, the germ, simply, of the larger one, but the full and completed political and social organism; the perfected growth, and even better adapted for human habitation and occupancy. The great city is like a great forest, oppressive by its vastness and its darkness; the sunshine does not reach to its depths, and under cover of its darkened streets and alleys the human tigers and jackals and hyenas ply their vocation of theft and blood, while even where the daylight shines the sight is pained and the soul made sick by the strong, sharp contrasts between plutocratic opulence and splendor, and human want and wretchedness and despair.

ORIGIN AND NAME.

The origins and beginnings of cities, large or small, is always a subject of profound interest to the student of humanity. The old saying that "God made the country and man made the town," is only half true, for the history of the matter seems to be that man cannot make a city where nature and providence have decided that there shall be none. That man made city out West, untenanted and as dead and silent as the catacombs, is a startling and monumental witness to the truth of this proposition.

The fact is that the inception and growth of cities proceed upon laws of their own and which are only partially understood by men. A new land, with forest, plain and mountain, with seas and lakes and rivers, lies fair to the sun; the mighty rolling tide of emigration comes sweeping along and following some higher or divine instinct which points the way, here and there the nucleus of cities is formed, like the beginning of a vegetable or animal growth, and the human swarms cluster there until they sometimes grow to vast aggregations of humanity, like London, or New York, or Chicago. When a great land is first settled and occupied by its vast inflowing human tide, we may imagine the Muse of History, leaning upon her tablet, and with ear attentive, exclaiming in a slight paraphrase of the language of our own Whittier:

"I hear the tread of pioneers of cities yet to be,

The first low wash of waves where soon shall roll a human sea."

The city of Kalamazoo, though not destined to be one of the great centres of population, was, nevertheless, fortunate in its origin and location. When the first settlers came sweeping in from

the East in the early thirties, they paused at the little French trading post found on the eastern side of a sparkling river, which the Indians had already named Kih—Kalamazoo—"it boils like a pot," from which to the westward stretched in a gentle rise a beautiful burr oak plain, surrounded and walled in by shapely and picturesque wooded hills; a sunny and most inviting spot for human habitation and the building of a pleasant and prosperous inland city. Over this lovely glade and and the Ox-bow bend in the river the genius of Cooper has thrown its spell in his novel of "The Oak Openings," the scene of which is laid on this spot.

But it is not alone the genius of the great novelist, or the spirit of romance or tradition that has distinguished this lovely natural scene where our sturdy pioneers first lingered. That other mighty and more practical genius of human progress has made it the site and home of a beautiful, enterprising and prosperous city of nearly 25,000 people, situated on the great central highway of travel from the East to the West, almost exactly midway between Detroit and Chicago, surrounded by a rich agricultural region, in the metropolis and market, the very garden of Michigan.

THE SETTING OF THE CITY--KALAMAZOO COUNTY.

Before proceeding to the history and description of the city proper, it may be found interesting to pause for a moment to take a brief view of this region around about it, this rich, natural setting of the jewel.

Kalamazoo County is one of the best agricultural counties in the State. It embraces sixteen townships, each six miles square and holds within its limits, besides the city of Kalamazoo, the villages of Galesburg, Schoolcraft, Vicksburgh, Augusta and Richland. The land comprising the County was purchased of the Pottowatamie Indians; surveyed by the United States Government in 1829; organized in 1830, and first offered at Government sale in June, 1831. By treaty stipulation the Indians vacated the County and went to their Western Reservation in 1833. The first white settlement of the County, was at Prairie Ronde in 1828.

The general surface of the County is undulating, the soil alluvial, about seventy-five per cent prairie and oak openings, the balance timbered bottoms and meadows. Pure water in ample supply is found throughout the County and is reached by wells of moderate depth. Besides, there are about seventy-five inland lakes in the County of varying size, abounding with fish—trout, bass, pickerel, pike, perch, sun-fish and other varieties. These lakes are connected by brooks and streams of clear water running between wooded banks, or through level, meadow land. Especial mention should be made of Gull Lake, situated in the northeast part of the County, twelve miles distant from the city of Kalamazoo, a magnificent body of pure water, nearly seven miles long, two miles wide, and in places 100 feet deep. On the banks of this lake are a number of popular summer resorts.

The health conditions of the County are of a high order. Malarial or climatic diseases are unknown. There are 2,910 farms in the County, averaging 110 acres each, under cultivation. Kalamazoo ranks second in the State for the largest number of acres in wheat. The estimated average annual product of the County is wheat, 1,000,000 bushels; corn, 1,700,000 bushels of ears; oats,